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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6318
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 1264
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1960
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 5855
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 2667
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 8266
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 7320
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 002947

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)

SUBJECT: WAVE OF TERRORIST ATTACKS CONTINUES

REF: A. PESHAWAR 220

[B. ISLAMABAD 2591](#)

[C. ISLAMABAD 2523](#)

ISLAMABAD 00002947 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its allies are continuing -- and intensifying -- their wave of terrorist attacks in Pakistan's settled areas. Separate attacks in Multan, Lahore, and Peshawar during December 7-8 killed over 70 people. These three attacks came on the heels of a December 4 attack on a Rawalpindi mosque which killed approximately 40 people, mostly military officers and soldiers and their family members. Peshawar remains the focal point for the terrorism wave, with 13 bombings that, according to press reports, claimed almost 300 lives. Though the attacks are aimed at weakening the country's resolve to continue the military campaign against the TTP in the FATA, the Army appears to remain committed to the fight. President Zardari, however, is preoccupied with his own future and has not demonstrated leadership in rallying the public against the terrorist and in support of the military. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (SBU) A wave of terrorist attacks by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and its allies in Pakistan's settled areas, which began several weeks before the Army launched its South Waziristan campaign on October 17, appears to be intensifying. On December 8, a car bomb blast near the offices of a "security agency," possibly the ISI, in Multan, Punjab province, killed eight people and injured 35. Multan -- which is Pakistan's sixth largest city, with a population of around 1.5 million -- had not previously been struck by a terrorist attack during 2009. Several hours later, in NWFP's Lakki Marwat district, a bomb exploded on a bridge as a bus was passing by. The media has not yet reported casualty figures for that attack.

[1](#)3. (C) Just a day before, on December 7, two bomb blasts at Lahore's Moon Market killed 49 and injured over 150, while a suicide bomber blew himself up outside of a Peshawar courthouse, killing 11 and wounding at least 50. (Note: Whether a third December 7 attack -- a bombing in Quetta that injured nine outside the entrance to a military residential complex -- is connected to the TTP terrorism wave is less clear, given that other groups, including extremist Baloch organizations, have also been responsible for terrorist

attacks in the Quetta area. However, most of those attacks have been targeted assassinations of government officials. End Note.)

¶4. (C) The Moon Market attack was the first in Lahore since November 2, when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a highway checkpoint. On October 15, armed militants conducted simultaneous attacks in the Lahore area against two police training centers and the Federal Investigation Agency's regional headquarters. ConGen Lahore contacts have remarked that they found the Moon Market attack particularly disturbing because it was a departure from previous attacks on security facilities or on public figures (i.e., the Sri Lankan cricket team). Lahoris fear they will see more attacks on soft targets. The Lahore District Commissioner and Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Assembly told ConGen Lahore that they were convinced there was an Indian hand behind the attacks. When pressed, they admitted no evidence had yet been discovered at Moon Market; however, they did not believe a Pakistani could have conceived of an attack on innocent women and children.

¶5. (U) On December 4, a group of armed militants disguised as worshippers attacked Rawalpindi's Parade Lane mosque, which is frequented by military officials and their families, killing around 40 people through a combination of gunfire, grenades, and bombs. The victims included one major general, a brigadier general, several other military officers, the 20-year-old son of Army 11th Corps Commander Lieutenant General Masood Aslam, and 17 children. The TTP publicly claimed responsibility for the attack. On December 2, a suicide bomber blew himself up in front of the main entrance gate to Naval Headquarters in Islamabad after security personnel stopped and questioned him. Two security guards

ISLAMABAD 00002947 002.2 OF 002

were killed in the incident.

¶6. (U) Peshawar remains the focal point for terrorist attacks in Pakistan's settled areas. Since the latest wave began in late September, there have been 13 bombings in Peshawar which, according to media calculations, have claimed almost 300 lives. This includes an October 28 car bombing during the Secretary's visit to Pakistan that devastated Peshawar's Meena bazaar, killing 117 people and injuring at least 168.

¶7. (C) Comment: The TTP's wave of terrorism appears to be intensifying, and we see no signs that it will abate any time soon. The TTP's terrorist acts remain aimed at weakening the resolve of the Army, government, and public to continue the military campaign against TTP strongholds in the FATA. However, there is no evidence thus far that the Army plans on backing down. On the contrary, at a December 5 funeral for military victims of the Parade Lane mosque attack, COAS General Kayani stressed that the Army's commitment to "defend and protect Pakistan at all costs." That said, the Army has made clear that maintaining strong public support for its military operations is essential. The TTP has continued its own strategy of claiming responsibility solely for its attacks against military and law enforcement installations and officials, which has fueled conspiracy theories of foreign -- especially U.S. or Indian -- involvement in attacks against markets and other civilian targets (see ref A).

¶8. (C) Comment Continued: Unfortunately, President Zardari remains preoccupied with his own future and has not used the power of his office to rally the public against the terrorists and in support of the military and its campaign. While he later visited survivors of the Parade Lane mosque attack, he was notably absent from the December 5 funeral attended by COAS Kayani and Prime Minister Gilani. For his part, PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif is also not playing a constructive role. After visiting survivors of the Moon Market attack at a Lahore hospital on December 8, Nawaz gave a statement to the media in which he implied that there was

an Indian hand behind the terrorism wave.
PATTERSON